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Canadian Heroes of Pioneer Days

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Canadian Heroes

Canadian Heroes
of
Pioneer Days

By

Mabel Burns McKinley

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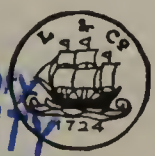

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Toronto - London - New York
1930

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T. H. BEST PRINTING CO., LIMITED
TORONTO, ONT.

To the Boys and Girls of Canada

This book is dedicated by the Author to those boys and girls who have read and enjoyed Canadian Heroines of Pioneer Days and to those who have yet to become acquainted with some of the early Settlers of Canada.

We hope that Canadian Heroes may help you further to be loyal to your country and become better citizens through having greater knowledge of the early history of your country.

Introduction

It is with a great deal of pleasure that we have been able to publish Canadian Heroes of Pioneer Days which is the second book in the Maple Leaf Series. This has only been made possible by the success of Canadian Heroines of Pioneer Days which was the first book to be published in this Series.

It has been our endeavour, in publishing this Series, to try and convey to the school children of today the great hardships, and sacrifices that were endured by the early settlers to this country; the cruel battles with the Indians, the loss of many loyal, brave and staunch settlers through suffering from cold and hunger.

The author makes no attempt to give full details of particular battles, but only to tell in an interesting manner through a series of stories the main events in the different fields of action. Political details of changes of government, differences of theory and opinion, official mistakes and shortcomings, are purposely left out. Stress

is laid upon the real unity of will and purpose which bound together the many early settlers of Canada.

There is a very special pleasure in planning for the young, a series of stories and descriptions of the tremendous sacrifices and conflicts of the early settlers, in order that they may be brought to realize their responsibility to those heroic figures by whose efforts the heritage of our Dominion has been handed down to us, and through us, to the oncoming generation, who will eventually have the privilege of directing the public weal in Canada, a task that can only be effectively undertaken through an appreciative understanding of our early history.

THE EDITOR.

Toronto, March 18, 1930.

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Jacques Cartier

A large tree had been selected by Jacques Cartier's orders and cut down. From it a cross had been constructed.

"We shall take possession of this new land for our King. The cross will be the symbol of our religion," said Cartier.

On April 20th, 1534, he and his men had left France and had sailed across the Atlantic Ocean until they had reached Canada, though the country was not called by that name when Cartier first landed on its shores. They were now on the coast of Gaspé.

When the huge cross, thirty feet in height, was erected near the entrance to the harbor, Cartier and his men knelt in a circle around it. The little band of Frenchmen were surrounded by an inquisitive throng of natives who wondered what these strange, white-skinned beings were doing. They looked at the cross and at the

group of kneeling men and dimly realized the meaning of their uplifted hands.

The Indians also seemed to know that Cartier had taken the land for his own and when the Frenchmen returned to their ships the chief and some of his relatives came out in a canoe. The chief made a long speech which of course was entirely unintelligible to Cartier who was not acquainted with the Indians' language. But by means of signs and gestures he indicated plainly that he and his tribe owned the country.

The following year Cartier came again to Canada and this time he remained longer. He and his companions sailed up the Great River, as he called the St. Lawrence, the first white men to traverse that mighty waterway. They travelled day after day until they came to the Indian village of Stadacona, the present site of Quebec city.

Here Cartier decided to stay for the winter. Many of the Indians came out to the ships in their canoes bringing with them fruit, fish and maize. It was a favorable location and as there was an abundance of food, the ships were moored at the mouth of the St. Charles River, except the smallest of the three which Cartier took with him to explore the St. Lawrence farther up.

Arrival of Jacques Cartier at Hochelaga.
(*Courtesy Public Archives of Canada*)

The Indians had told him of a wonderful town called Hochelaga and he wanted to find out all he could about it.

The Indians at Stadacona were not willing for him to go. Perhaps they thought the white men with their alarming weapons which belched forth smoke and fire would become allies of the savages at Hochelaga. At any rate the chief, Donnacona, and his warriors did their best to frighten Cartier and prevent him going.

They shouted their terrible war-whoops. These blood-curdling yells were horrible to hear, but the white men, though unpleasantly surprised at this demonstration, were not intimidated.

Three of the tribe were then dressed as devils with black faces and immense horns. The canoe containing these hideous figures floated past the ships, while one of the savages chanted a warning not to proceed up the river.

But in spite of these attempts to dissuade him Cartier set off with the ship and two boats.

"It is a goodly country," he remarked as he stood on the deck of his ship and looked at the shores on either hand.

The Indians at Hochelaga, where the city of

Montreal now stands, had heard of his coming. A great crowd was waiting to receive him. They appeared friendly, and greatly excited at the visit of the white men. All through the night large bonfires were kept burning and the Indians danced around them.

The next day the savages escorted Cartier to their town. This was quite different from the towns and cities of France, and Cartier could see nothing grand about it, nothing to warrant the bragging of the Indians. But he gazed with curiosity at the bark-covered wigwams. There were some fifty or so of these, each nearly one hundred and fifty feet long and about forty feet wide. Inside were several fireplaces where the various families prepared their meals. The smoke rose to the roof and escaped through a convenient hole. A palisade walled in the houses; this was made up of three rows of saplings, the centre row upright and the other two bent toward it, the whole bound together by bark thongs.

Cartier held a sort of reception in the square enclosed by the wigwams. The Indians were very much interested in the visitors. They screamed with pleasure at the sight of these strange creatures who wore so many clothes and

carried such odd weapons. They examined their clothing and touched their beards which they thought especially peculiar.

After a while the Indians led Cartier to the top of the mountain behind the town. The view from the summit was magnificent and Cartier named the mountain Mount Royal on that account.

No other white man had ever seen that vast country which now opened before him on all sides. Where did the rivers come from, Cartier wondered, as he saw the St. Lawrence and Ottawa wind through woods and plain until they vanished from sight. What lay beyond the forests? He questioned the savages but could not understand their replies. However he gathered that there were large lakes and another great river flowing to the south. Silver and gold were to be had; so he judged because the Indians pointed to his silver whistle and yellow poniard hilt and then motioned toward the north. At the present day the silver mines at Cobalt and the gold mines at Porcupine are evidences that the red men knew of the riches stored under the earth.

Cartier did not remain long at Hochelaga; he returned to Stadacona to superintend prepara-

Jacques Cartier's return to Stadacona.
(*Courtesy Public Archives of Canada*)

tions for the coming winter. A supply of provisions was obtained from the Indians while a fence or palisade was built around the ships to protect them should the savages become hostile.

Although they had food to eat and a fortification which would keep out their enemies, they had not provided for the intense cold of a Canadian winter. The palisades did not protect them from the biting weather nor did their clothing. This was the first time any white men had spent a winter in the new land and these Frenchmen little guessed what Jack Frost could do when the thermometer fell to zero, or twenty and forty below. They were not accustomed to snow and for six months the ground was covered with it. Bitter winds penetrated every crack and crevice.

The Indians became more and more unfriendly and Cartier would not permit them to come within the walls of the fort.

Scurvy attacked the sailors. It was a disease they knew little about and no one could find a cure. Those afflicted with it suffered terribly. Cartier did not know what to do for them until he chanced to meet one of the Indians who had been in France with him. This man had been ill with the same disease and was now better.

Cartier learned that a medicine made from the bark and leaves of the white spruce tree had cured him. With this knowledge the sailors were able to shake off the dread disease, though many of them had already died.

When Cartier returned to France, he described to the King the large river he had navigated and the wonderful country through which it flowed. He related too how he had taken possession of it all for France.

Samuel Champlain

"On this spot we will erect our fort! Here we will build houses to shelter us from the freezing cold of winter," said Champlain.

He stood on the bank of the St. Lawrence River at the point where that vast body of water narrows to a width of about a mile.

"We must have cellars underneath our dwellings," he went on, "in which to store our winter's supply of food. Well indeed do I remember the first year we came to Canada. Alas! We were not then acquainted with the rigors of this northern clime and did not know how to protect ourselves from the ravages of frost and snow. But this time we will not make a similar mistake. We will build wisely and the colony we found will last forever."

Champlain's words were prophetic for ever since then the white man has dwelt at Quebec where he established his headquarters many years ago.

"The savages will injure us if they can," he continued, "so we must have walls and fortifications."

The men set to work and soon the buildings began to take shape. It was the third of July, 1608 when Champlain and his party landed at Quebec, so there was ample time to put up houses before the snow came.

Champlain realized the many difficulties in the way. There was the intense cold of winters such as they had never experienced in their own land. A few years before the French had tried to settle a colony on an island at the mouth of the St. Croix River, but they nearly perished of cold during that winter. They were surprised to find that rivers and lakes became ice-bound and that the very ground itself was frozen. They had never dreamed their stores of provisions would freeze as they did, nor that it would take such quantities of firewood to keep their houses warm. Zero and sub-zero weather does not trouble us because we are accustomed to it and have well-built houses and warm clothing. But to this little band of men from sunny France it was a very different matter.

However, though many of that first settlement died, Champlain had not been discouraged.

He had been ready to come again to Canada, and was now resolved to establish a colony that would survive.

He ordered the cellars to be deeply dug and trees to be cut for buildings. Fences or palisades were erected around the houses, for there were other dangers to be met besides those arising from the bitter cold. They were in the heart of a foreign country, surrounded on all sides by savage Indians.

Champlain had chosen an excellent spot for the fort. The steep cliffs at Quebec made a natural defence, and the river narrowing at that point gave him control over boats passing up and down. He had the buildings constructed as strongly as possible and placed the cannon he had brought from France on the ramparts.

But Champlain was not content to remain there quietly. He wished to explore the country beyond Quebec. But how was he to go through dense forests where lived tribes of savages who might at any moment pounce upon him and his men and kill them? There was only one way, he believed, and that was to make friends with the Indians.

One of the Indian chiefs came to Quebec and Champlain received him kindly. The chief

Arrival of Champlain at Quebec.
(Courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

thought the fort was a wonderful affair and was of the opinion it would be an excellent move to have the white men as his allies.

The chiefs sat in council and Champlain was one of them. They told him about the Iroquois Indians who roamed the forests at the other side of the great St. Lawrence River. They said that these bands of savages were exceedingly fierce and the white men would find it impossible to penetrate their land without aid.

The Huron and Algonquin chiefs persuaded Champlain to join their side and in return promised him assistance. Champlain thought this course was the only one open to him, for he needed the help of the Indians in order to explore the country as he wished. So he set out in company with them, on the warpath against the powerful Iroquois.

Champlain in his ship and the Indian allies in their birch bark canoes sailed up the St. Lawrence as far as the mouth of the Richelieu River. Here they turned toward the land of the Iroquois. Champlain was greatly disappointed when shortly afterwards they came to rapids through which his ship could not possibly pass.

He had not counted on this. The ship was to have been used in case of an attack by the Iro-

quois, but now he could take it no farther. Either he must proceed by canoe and on foot or give up the expedition.

But Champlain was the kind of man who did not allow dangers or difficulties to upset him. He announced that he would go on, but gave his men permission to return to Quebec if they wished. All but two went back. Champlain with these two fearless followers accompanied the Indians in their canoes.

On they went until they reached the lake which now bears the name of its discoverer, Champlain. Then came the first brush with the enemy. The Iroquois were frightened at the sight of the white men and the sound of their firearms which dealt quick death. They ran away. But they vowed vengeance on the French, and ever afterwards lost no opportunity of injuring them.

Champlain was not content with this expedition. There were other parts of the country he wished to explore, for he still fancied he could find a way through to Asia.

Twice he ascended the Ottawa River, hoping to arrive at the ocean which separated Canada from India. The perils and dangers of these trips were enough to discourage even brave and hardy men, but Champlain refused to be dis-

heartened. On his second trip he succeeded in reaching Lake Nipissing, and going on still farther he came to the shores of Georgian Bay.

"Surely we have found the passage to Asia at last," he said, as he gazed over that vast inland sea, Lake Huron.

But when he tasted the water and found that it was fresh, not salt as he had expected, he knew he had been mistaken. This country of Canada was proving much larger than he had thought, but even his liveliest imagination could not picture the miles and miles of land which lay between Quebec and the Pacific Ocean, the western boundary of Canada.

When, early in the fall of that year, the Indians set out on the warpath against their ancient enemies the Iroquois, Champlain was one of their number. They journeyed by way of Lake Couchiching, Lake Simcoe, Sturgeon Lake and Trent River to the Bay of Quinte, and there Champlain saw another great inland sea, Lake Ontario. He was the first white man to discover this lake. If you take a map of Ontario and follow the journey Champlain made after leaving Quebec you will see how he explored this part of the country.

In their fleet of canoes the Indians crossed

over to the other side of the great lake; Champlain, and the few white men in his party, with them. On the former occasion when Champlain had helped against the Iroquois the latter had been frightened at the sight of the white men and the destructive power of their guns. Champlain's allies, the Hurons and Algonquins, thought the Frenchmen must have used magic of some sort, and on this trip they refused to exercise ordinary caution, trusting to the magic to fight for them.

Instead of pursuing the usual Indian tactics, creeping silently from tree to tree, always under cover, they romped forward talking loudly and having a very gay time indeed. Of course the Iroquois had warning of their approach and were prepared for them.

There was no possibility of the Onondaga's stronghold being taken by surprise. It was a well fortified stockade. Champlain describes it as having palisades of trees, four rows of them, each about thirty feet high. The attacking party were defeated and Champlain was injured in the leg by an arrow.

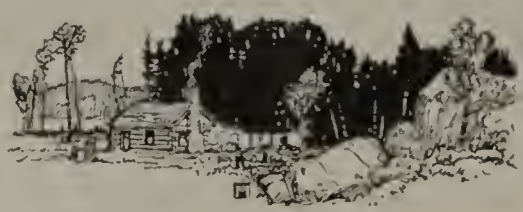
They retreated to their canoes and hurried back to Lake Ontario. Here Champlain reminded them of their promise to give him a canoe

and a guide to take him to Quebec. However, as the Indians refused his request, there was nothing for Champlain to do but spend the winter with them. He was invited by a friendly Huron chief to be his guest, and through the long, cold, winter months Champlain lived in a wigwam and shared the food of the Indians.

But he was not idle during this time. He explored the surrounding country and learned much of the habits and customs of the natives.

When spring came he left for Quebec and on his arrival was received joyfully. The people had feared when he had not returned in the fall that some evil had befallen him.

Champlain was an upright, honorable man, much liked by his Indian allies. He was the real founder of Canada, and did a great deal for the country in the twenty-seven years of his rule.



Sieur De Maisonneuve

"Hark!" Sieur de Maisonneuve held up his hand for silence. The little band of colonists, behind the palisades of the fort at Montreal, listened. They heard from the depths of the nearby forest the baying of the dogs. "The Iroquois! Pilot has found them and is giving us warning of their approach," continued Maisonneuve.

The dreaded Iroquois had been tormenting the small settlement. These savage warriors were determined to blot out the venturesome whites who had taken up their abode on the site of the old Indian village of Hochelaga, where now stands the city of Montreal. The plan they generally pursued was to hide in the woods and attack any of the settlers who came to cut firewood or to cultivate the fields.

At times, however, the Iroquois gathered in large numbers and tried to take the fort by surprise. But Maisonneuve, the leader of the small

colony was a wise man. He kept on the lookout for signs of danger and repulsed every attack.

Many of the soldiers with him were restless. They did not like his method of warfare. They preferred to march out in array and attack the savages in the open. Maisonneuve knew this was not a good way to combat the Indians, but he also knew that his men were growing uneasy under the restraint, and thinking in their hearts that he was a coward for being so careful.

When the faithful Pilot and her family announced the presence of the Iroquois in the forest, several of the soldiers spoke up. "Let us fight the dastardly redskins. Let us make a sortie out of the gate and fall upon them."

For a few moments Maisonneuve gazed at them searchingly. He said to himself, "Foolish men! They will not have a chance whatever against the wily Iroquois." But he felt it necessary to do something. The men were discontented with his leadership, and must be taught a lesson. Very well," he said, "we will set forth!"

The men were surprised at his answer, and pleased to learn that their leader was willing to sally forth and fight.

Pilot and her half-grown pups continued to bark. This clever dog had a keen scent for

hostile Iroquois and had taught her puppies to hunt for them too. It was part of her self-imposed duty to scour the woods about the fort and give warning if the redskins were hiding there. She and her brood were much too smart to be caught. They always managed to keep out of the savages' way.

The soldiers were soon ready. They carried firearms with them and thought they would have no difficulty in driving away the Iroquois. But they did not understand the Indians' manner of fighting as well as did Sieur de Maisonneuve.

As the small party of Frenchmen proceeded toward the forest nothing was to be seen. Many of them believed the savages had become alarmed and had run away. Not so, Maisonneuve! Not so, Pilot and her family! The deep baying of the dogs showed they knew the Iroquois were at hand. The caution with which the brave French leader advanced indicated that he expected every seemingly harmless tree to be full of peril.

And so it proved to be! Hidden behind bushes and the trunks of trees the Iroquois sent forth a shower of arrows. These rained upon the colonists, who returned fire promptly. But of what use were their rifle and pistol bullets?

What harm could they do to massive forest trees?

Safe in shelter the savages waited and then poured out another storm of arrows. Three of the white men were killed and two taken prisoners.

"Fall back, my men! Retire to the fort!" Maisonneuve's command rang out sharply.

The remaining members of the band turned and rushed headlong for the protection of the stockade. All but the leader! Keeping his face to the foe, a pistol in each hand, Maisonneuve backed step by step toward the fort. Steadily, courageously, he covered the retreat of his followers.

It did seem as though one man alone would be overcome, no matter how bravely he fought.

The savages, seeing the palefaces flee, came boldly forth from their hiding places. The Indian chief saw and recognized Maisonneuve.

"The leader of the palefaces!" he muttered. "He is my prey! His scalp shall hang at my belt! I shall take him prisoner!"

The Iroquois chief rushed at Maisonneuve and in another instant the brave Frenchman would

Maisonneuve killing the Iroquois chief.

(*Courtesy Public Archives of Canada*)

have been captured had he not, with steady hand, aimed at the savage and shot him through the heart.

The fall of their chief halted the Indian braves. They stopped to carry him away and Maisonneuve was able to gain the fort in safety.

After this the leadership of this intrepid Frenchman was never questioned in the colony at Montreal.

It was a hard task to found a settlement in the heart of a country where savages were a continual trouble. Maisonneuve had been aware of the difficulties to be encountered when he led the little band of men and women to the island of Montreal. But he was not daunted. His purpose was not only to establish the colony but also to convert the heathen savages. The Hurons and Algonquins were friendly. They did not disturb the peace of the settlement, but as soon as the fierce Iroquois found out that the white men had built a fort at Hochelaga they had declared war against them.

There was constant danger from these cruel savages. If Maisonneuve had not been a strong, self-reliant man, tenacious of purpose, the outpost at Montreal would probably have been abandoned. For twenty-two years he ruled as governor of this isolated fort.

Many times the colonists were threatened with destruction, but they always survived the perils that beset them. They relied greatly upon the power of prayer, and some of the miraculous escapes from death experienced by Maisonneuve and the men and women under him, can only be explained in this way.

Maisonneuve was a very devout Christian. At one time, in the early days of the settlement, the St. Lawrence River overflowed its banks. The waters rose higher and higher until they came to the palisades of the fort. The colonists were almost in despair. At this moment Maisonneuve placed a cross at the edge of the incoming water and vowed if the flood would abate to carry a cross himself to the top of Mount Royal.

The little company lifted their hearts in prayer and watched. Their faith was rewarded and slowly but surely the water retreated to its confines between the river banks.

Maisonneuve did not forget the vow he had made. He carried a large wooden cross on his shoulders up the mountain side. It was very heavy and the ascent was steep. He was weary long before the summit was reached, but still he kept on, and the cross was planted on the top of Mount Royal.

Count Frontenac

Two large flat-bottomed boats and one hundred and twenty canoes filled with French soldiers and Indians moved slowly forward. Barges and canoes were painted in brilliant reds and blues. In the midst, dressed in his regalia, was Count Frontenac. He intended to land on the shore of Lake Ontario near the spot where the city of Kingston now stands.

A canoe put out to meet them. In it were stately Iroquois chiefs who greeted the visitors with ceremony and led the way to their encampment.

The journey from Montreal had been arduous. The barges had with difficulty been towed up the rapids, but the Indians had worked cheerfully, willing to do everything Frontenac desired.

In the council which followed, Frontenac smoked the pipe of peace with the Indian chiefs.

He made a speech, impressing upon them the importance of the two great commandments—love to God and love to man. He urged that the war hatchet be buried and that peace be established.

His words greatly pleased the Iroquois as also did the gifts of guns, powder, lead and gunflints. He gave them other presents, overcoats, shirts, stockings and glass beads. When he said he was going to erect a fort where they could trade with advantage the Indians put no obstacle in his way.

"Here," he said, "you will find all sorts of refreshments and commodities which I shall cause to be furnished to you at the cheapest possible rate."

They replied that the great Onontio, as they called Frontenac, should be their father and they his children, and that they would live in amity one with the other.

"See that no complaints are made to me henceforth on this subject," Frontenac said to them, "for I shall be very angry, as I insist that you Iroquois, Algonquins and other nations that have me for a father shall live henceforth as brothers."

The building of Fort Frontenac went on apace.

By the twentieth of the month it was completed. The Indians were surprised to see how fast the men worked; they cleared the ground; felled trees for timber; dug trenches; erected walls and palisades with such despatch that it seemed wonderful to the onlookers.

Frontenac waited for the arrival of the boats bringing a year's provisions for the new fort. Then he returned to Montreal, reaching there on the 1st of August, 1673. The trip had been very successful. Peace had been made with the Iroquois and a fort built in an important position where the Indians could trade without having to make the long journey to Montreal or Quebec.

The remaining years of Frontenac's first rule in Canada were comparatively peaceful. Farmers were able to cultivate their fields without having savages constantly springing out upon them. The fear of hidden foes lying in ambush near the forts and villages was removed.

In 1682 Frontenac was recalled to France and the governors who succeeded him did not try to make friends with the Indians. They treated them with contempt; and Denonville, when he was governor, even seized some friendly Indians and sent them to France to be chained as galley slaves in French ships. The result of this policy

was that the redskins were fired with anger. It was not their nature to submit tamely to indignities, so once again the colonists lived in constant dread of attack. Bands of savages haunted the woods about Montreal and Quebec, and captured, killed or tortured all on whom they could lay their hands.

In the storm and darkness of the night of August 4th, 1689, a large force of Indians crossed Lake St. Louis to Lachine. They waited silently in groups near the houses of the unsuspecting villagers and shortly before day dawned the air was rent by the dreaded war-whoop. The savages fell upon the inmates of the dwellings and terrorized the entire colony .

Denonville was helpless in the face of such difficulties. There was only one man at that time under whose rule the Indians had been friendly and that was Frontenac. By now he was sixty-nine years of age, but he willingly accepted the commission offered him by the King of France, and set sail for Canada.

When the colonists heard that Frontenac was returning they were filled with joy. An enthusiastic greeting was given him at Quebec. Though darkness had fallen before his ship arrived torches made the way clear as day. They shone

upon the glowing faces of the inhabitants who thronged to welcome him. Such rejoicing as there was! Even those formerly opposed to him were glad he had come, for all had faith that he would save them from the perils to which they were exposed.

It was not an easy task which confronted Frontenac. The Indians remembered the treatment they had received while Frontenac had been absent and were not ready to trust the French. But Frontenac sent messages to the various chiefs assuring them that now he had returned all would be well.

It was uncertain how the Indians would respond. One day in August the colonists at Lachine were alarmed to observe a fleet of canoes on Lake St. Louis. Their first thought was that a party of savages were on the war-path. The memory of the hideous massacre the previous year was still vivid in their minds.

Frontenac was at Montreal and a messenger was hastily sent off to inform him of the redskins' approach. A second messenger arrived hard on the heels of the first one to say that the Indians were not bent on warfare but had come with canoes laden with beaver skins to trade.

Three days later a grand council was held. The chiefs of the many tribes represented made speeches. The spokesman for the Hurons brought three belts of wampum. With one he expressed the thanks of his people for the good-will the great Onontio has shown them during his former stay in Canada; with the second he urged that good bargains in trade be given them; with the third he pleaded for help in fighting their enemies.

Frontenac had a feast prepared for his Indian guests, and before the eating commenced he spoke to them.

"I, your father, will prosecute war against the Iroquois your enemies." he said. "They shall be forced to sue for peace, and after that they will be my children as before. We shall be one family."

He went on to say that the Iroquois were planning an attack. What should they do? Meet them, or wait until they arrived? At this juncture he seized a tomahawk and waving it around his head walked rapidly back and forth before the assembled Indians. The sight of their beloved Onontio leading them in a war-dance delighted the savages. Shouting their wild war songs they joined madly in the dance.

The feast which followed was a great pleasure to the redskins. They ate and ate of the dishes of meat—two oxen and six large dogs had been cooked into a savory whole by the addition of boiled prunes.

But other dangers besides the Iroquois menaced the colony. War had been waging on the continent between France and England and it was carried to the New World. Frontenac set to work to repair and strengthen the forts. He invaded the New England settlements and harried the settlers. He was in command at Quebec when the English besieging it were repulsed.

The colonists in New France were again able to carry on their various pursuits in comparative safety from marauding bands of savages during the time Frontenac was governor. But he was up in years, nearing the eighty mark, and on the 28th of November, 1698, he passed away. The Indians mourned for the loss of their great Onontio and the colony in New France lost an able and courageous ruler.

Pierre Radisson

Part I

Captured by the Iroquois

A lone French-Canadian lad, about seventeen years of age, lay tied to the cross-bar of an Indian canoe. Close beside him were the scalps of the two companions with whom he had gone hunting the day before. The three lads had started out from Three Rivers, a settlement of the colony on the north bank of the Saint Lawrence River, intending to bring back a bag of game—ducks and wild geese. They had scarcely gone more than a mile from the fort when they met a herdsman driving his cattle to Three Rivers. He advised them to keep away from the forest.

"I saw things that looked like a multitude of heads," he said. "They rose up out of the earth close to the foot of the hills. Do not on any account go near them. I fear they are the Iroquois."

The Iroquois! The dreaded Indians who had tortured and scalped so many of the colonists;

who had made it unsafe for settlers to work their farms; who had harried the countryside until the people in the outlying districts had sought shelter within the walls of Three Rivers. The three boys looked at each other in alarm but they did not turn back immediately. They primed their muskets and shot a few more of the water-fowl.

The two older boys however, had been longer in the country than had Pierre Radisson, the youngest of the three, and they knew what great danger they were in. So they halted and after discussion decided to return to the safety of the fort. Not so Pierre; he had only been in Canada about a year and was not used to the ways of the Indians.

"Go back, if you wish," he said to his companions. "I am not afraid! I shall go on! I do not fear the Indians!"

Lurking in the grasses the Iroquois braves heard the lad speak, and watched him march boldly away. They did not disturb him, but turned their attention to the two now making for the fort. It was the work of an instant to slay and scalp them. Then they waited, their canoes hidden among the tall rushes at the water's edge, for Pierre to return.

The lad went merrily on, shooting at the ducks, the wild geese, the plover and the curlew. He was enjoying himself as lads do, but after a time he found he had more game than he could take back with him. So he hid what he could not carry in the hollow trunks of the trees, intending to return on the morrow for it.

But the next day, alas! he was in the midst of the Iroquois band; each minute being taken farther and farther away from his home and relations; in the daytime tied to the cross-bar of one of the canoes; sleeping at night between two Indian braves. However, his life had been spared. He had not been slain as had the other two hunters. You may wonder why this lad escaped the fate which had befallen them. It must have been his bravery, his lack of fear, that appealed to the Indians, and the courageous way he had defended himself when he had found he was surrounded and cut off from returning to the fort. The Indians have a great admiration for anyone exhibiting courage and bravery.

The canoes journeyed up the Saint Lawrence until they reached the mouth of the Richelieu River, and after three days travelling the Indians loosened the boy's bonds and freed him from the cross-bar. He was given a paddle and

immediately began to use it—to help with the work of the boat. The Indians saw that he was unaccustomed to the use of the paddle and was dipping deeply and laboriously into the water. So they taught him to wield it as they did, with light strong strokes, and in this way Pierre Radisson learned his first lesson in handling a canoe, an art in which he became adept as he grew older.

Though the Mohawks showed the young French lad a good deal of favor they nevertheless treated him as a prisoner, exulting over him to another band of their tribe whom they met. The two bands made merry. They built a large camp-fire, and, lighted by the blaze of the burning fagots, they danced the scalp-dance. The scalps dangled fearfully from their spear-heads, while the savages, by motions and gestures, portrayed the various hideous scenes in which they had taken part.

What a place for the white boy! What a trial of nerves and courage it must have been to witness the dreadful scalp-dance, two of the scalps those of his former companions with whom he had so light-heartedly gone hunting. But Pierre had to conquer his feelings; he was obliged to amuse his savage captors; to sing

songs for their entertainment. One may be certain he was thankful when the evening's hideous performance was over and he could lie down and rest.

The Indians now thought they would make Pierre like one of themselves. They shaved his head in front and decorated it on top with the crest of a brave. Poor Pierre! When he looked at himself in a tin mirror they loaned him, a piece of tin used by the Indians for reflecting the sun's rays, a means of signaling to each other, he was not at all pleased with his appearance.

The lad was homesick for his people and his home. But he put on the best front he could, was cheerful and good-natured during the trip. He helped all he was able; he paddled a canoe up the river; carried the loads when they had to make a portage; cut wood for the camp-fires at night. The Indians noticed all these things, and they stood him in good stead a little later on.

The band continued its homeward journey. They reached Lake Champlain, and here one night they were disturbed by the sound of guns. They at once took to the canoes and made the white boy lie flat in the bottom of one while they

paddled stealthily away from the scene of alarm. Pierre went to sleep, lulled by the motion of the canoe, and after putting a safe distance behind them, the warriors sought shelter among the rushes at the side of the lake.

Here they remained for several days then continued on to Lake George. From this point their way lay through dense forest, and the going was difficult. But Pierre bore himself manfully. He did two things that greatly pleased the braves. He saw an old warrior struggling under a load that was too heavy for him and, taking the pack away from him, he carried it himself the rest of the march. This caused the savages to grunt approval. And when one of the tribe, a bullying young brave, hit Pierre a nasty blow and the lad retaliated, giving him a sound beating, the rest of the band sided with Pierre.

At last the warriors had reached their village. Now came the crucial moment for the prisoners. Torture of all kinds was in store for them.

Out came the women and children, and the men who had been left behind. They danced and sang; jumped in the air and shouted the praises of the braves returning from a victorious war-path. They lined up, making a lane between them and stood armed with clubs and whips to

beat the prisoners. These, with bound arms and fettered feet, were forced to run the gauntlet and to take all the blows showered upon them.

But when it came to Pierre's turn, the braves, with whom he had marched so cheerfully, gave proof of the favor he had won for himself. They left him free from all shackles and advised him to run for all he was worth through the waiting line. Away went the white lad, steering his course skilfully down the lane; and not one of the clubs or whips hit him.

The men burst into applause when Pierre emerged untouched and the women shrieked with laughter. One of the latter claimed the boy and signified her intention of adopting him as her son. The council sat in judgment. The great council pipe was passed around and solemnly smoked while the braves listened to the woman's appeal. They nodded their heads in assent and at the end gave, or rather grunted, their permission. Pierre was to be adopted into the Mohawk tribe and was to be one of them.

The white lad knew that his life depended on submission to their wishes. He went docilely with his foster-parents to their wigwam and became as a son to them. His Iroquois foster-father gave a feast in his honor. There were

beaver tails, bear paws, and moose noses set before the Mohawk braves. Pierre was brought in, decorated with all the trapping of a rich chief's son, colored blankets, embroidered leggings, and strings of wampum. Thus Pierre Radisson in 1652 began a life that was to aid him materially in later years during his journeys of exploration.

Pierre Radisson

Part II

Escaping from the Indians

After Pierre had been adopted into the family of the Mohawk chief he led the life of an Indian brave dressed in the same fashion; ate the same food; slept in the wigwam or marched on the trail with the rest of the braves. He hunted and fished and to outward appearance was an Indian completely. The Mohawks were delighted with the boy and wanted to keep him with them all the time. But Pierre was not satisfied. He had been on the warpath with the savages and their acts of cruelty had disgusted him with Indian life.

He longed to return to Three Rivers and see his family and countrymen but the Iroquois band kept a vigilant eye on him, watching that he did not escape. They took him with them when they went on the war-path against the Hurons of the upper lakes but would not allow him to go with the party which marched toward Quebec and his old home.

He behaved so well on this trip against the Hurons, according to the Indians' way of thinking, that they felt certain he was quite satisfied to remain with them. So, when an expedition was made against the white settlers in the vicinity of Port Orange, now Albany, he was permitted to accompany them.

The braves started out and reached the farmers' homes which lay near the little fort. These they entered and helped themselves to whatever they wanted, eating the food they found and drinking the beer the Dutch settlers had provided for themselves. Of course they became intoxicated as a result.

"I will not drink any of the liquor," said Pierre to himself, as he saw his companions making free with the contents of the farmers' cellars. "I must keep my head clear and cool, and look around me. These are white people who live here. I may be able to talk with them."

But he found the language he heard entirely different from his own. The settlers were Dutch and spoke the Dutch tongue. Pierre moved among them as one of the Indians and the Mohawks kept close beside him for they did not wish to give him any chance to escape. The lad was dressed like the other braves, with garnished

buckskin and painted face. No one knew he was not what he seemed to be until a soldier of the fort noticed him and cried out in the Iroquois language.

"You are not an Indian! You are a white boy! The paint and grease cannot disguise you completely!"

This startled the Mohawks. They looked keenly at Pierre. Would he try to have the white men rescue him? They stood like statues and waited to see what the boy would do.

Pierre knew that his life was not worth a *sou* if he let the soldier know that he was Pierre Radisson, a French lad, who had been captured the year before when out hunting near the fort of Three Rivers. He thought quickly. While among the Indians he had learned something of their cunning and craftiness and these now stood him in good stead. He pretended to be surprised at the idea of being anything but an Indian and he acted the part so well that the braves relaxed their vigilance. They thought he was contented with his lot among them and would not try to escape.

When the Indians returned to the beer pots of the Dutch colonists Pierre was left with the soldier who had spoken to him. Again he spoke,

but this time in French, and Pierre, who had not heard his native tongue for over a year, was more than delighted to hear it again. The soldier was a Frenchman who was living with the Dutch, and the two exiles from France flung themselves into each other's arms, rejoicing over meeting with a fellow-countryman.

The news spread quietly among the settlers, and they made a great fuss over Pierre, treating him to the best they had and offering to ransom him from the Iroquois. However, Pierre felt he ought to return to his Indian foster-parents. Besides, he was afraid that the vengeance of the savages would fall upon the inhabitants of Fort Orange if he consented to remain. On that account, when the braves returned to the Mohawk lodges he went along with them. He was received with great acclaim by the Indians. Had he not gone among the white men, been treated by them with great honor and yet had returned to the wigwam of his adoption? He was the idol of the tribe.

But the white lad had seen the civilization of the white people at Fort Orange and he longed to go back to his home. The revolting cruelty of the Indians, their unpalatable food and smoky wigwams, aroused a distaste for the life of savagery.

"I will escape! I will leave the Indian lodge and make my way to Fort Orange! From there I may find a way of returning to my own people," the lad said to himself.

He gave no hint of his intentions to the Mohawks, but went about his daily duties as usual. Then one day, it was in the fall of 1653, he took his hatchet and started out early in the morning, as though to do a day's wood-cutting He waited until he was beyond the environment of the village then he began to run. He ran steadily and swiftly all day. He did not dare stop to eat or rest; on he must go, on and on, through the forests of the Mohawk Valley, ever heading toward Fort Orange.

When night came on he still continued his wearisome journey. The stars lent their kindly light; the sound of the river guided him when the trail was difficult to follow; the creatures of the wild, hunting for food, looked curiously at the slight figure of the French Canadian boy as he sped through the forest.

Daylight came and Pierre was almost worn out. Yet he did not dare tarry; he must keep going. The rocks were slippery with frost; the mountain streams were coated with ice; the rivers he had to ford waist high, and sometimes

swim across; his moccasins were torn to shreds and his feet sore and bleeding. But he was still some distance from the most outlying of the white settlers' cabins.

It was well for the lad that he had been schooled in endurance and fortitude by the Indians. Otherwise he could never have continued. When noon came he was still persevering, though running blindly.

"It is only a few miles farther now," he muttered to himself, as he staggered on, swaying dizzily from side to side. "Will I be able to reach the settlement? I must do it! I must!"

Vivid in his remembrance was the first time he had tried to escape. Along with an Algonquin captive he had broken away from the Mohawk braves and had succeeded in getting within a day's journey of Three Rivers, his home on the Saint Lawrence, when he had been recaptured. The fiendish tortures he had endured at that time, the torments he had suffered at the hands of the infuriated Iroquois, who had bound him with thongs to the stake, and who would have killed him if his foster-parents had not begged his life, paying for it with strings of wampum—these things were fresh in his

mind. He knew what awaited him if he fell into the hands of the pursuing Mohawks.

On he went, nerved by desperation. At last, about four o'clock in the afternoon, when almost ready to drop with fatigue, he caught sight of a cabin in the clearing. It belonged to one of the farmers of the settlement. As soon as the friendly farmer, who was chopping wood outside the cabin door, saw the lad he stopped his work and hospitably urged him to enter. Pierre made sure there were no Iroquois lurking about before he accepted the invitation.

Now that the lad had come to the outskirts of the settlement was his safety assured? No. He still had to reckon on the Mohawk braves who would most certainly follow on his trail as soon as his absence was discovered. His only hope lay in reaching Fort Orange, but how was he to get there in his exhausted condition?

It was decided that the farmer should go and bring back help from the fort. While he set out on his journey his wife hid the lad behind some sacks of wheat and put out all the lights. Anyone passing the cabin in the darkness would not notice it but go straight on. Indians passed, singing and shouting, but none came to the cabin. By and by the farmer returned with a

number of men and soldiers from the fort. Thanking the settler and his wife for their kindness Pierre accompanied the party to Fort Orange.

Now surely he was safe within the walls of the fort! But there was only a handful of white people living in Fort Orange; some fifty log houses comprised the entire settlement, and they were more or less at the mercy of the bloodthirsty Iroquois. The colonists decided to hide Pierre. For three days he lay hidden while the Mohawk braves who had followed his trail searched the fort, calling him by name over and over again. Pierre could see them as he peered through the cracks of the thinly-boarded attic where he crouched behind some sacks of wheat.

After a time the Indians departed and Pierre was permitted to leave his hiding-place. But Fort Orange was not going to be a safe place for him to remain for any length of time. He was eager to return to his home and see his parents and sisters. There was only one course to take—that was to sail from Orange to New York and from there to Europe. From Europe he could take a vessel to Canada. A roundabout trip, surely, but the only possible means for him to adopt.

Pierre Radisson

Part III

A Lonely Fort

What rejoicing there was when Pierre reached his home and was reunited to his parents and sisters. It was two years since the Iroquois had captured him and taken him to their far-off lodge in the Mohawk Valley. His family had given him up for dead, and great was their joy to have him restored safe and sound to them.

But a life of tranquillity and safety was not in store for the adventuresome lad. He had a great desire to explore the lands lying to the west, and in this ambition he was seconded by his brother-in-law Grosseillers.

"There are hundreds and hundreds of beaver pelts brought every year to Quebec by the Indians. They come from the far west and the north. Great riches lie in those unknown and as yet unexplored regions. Let us go and find them for ourselves."

So spoke the intrepid Pierre Radisson and Grosseillers agreed with him. But greater than the desire for wealth was the strong lure of discovery, to find out what lay beyond the Great Lakes, for that was as far as any of the white men had travelled. The Indians had brought rumors of a vast treeless country and an immense northern sea. The two men were eager to explore the new land. So in company with a party of Indians they set out and after many adventures reached Green Bay on Lake Michigan.

Here they had to pass the winter. But in order to insure their safety they first had to take warlike measures against the Iroquois who were lurking in the neighborhood, waiting to catch them unawares. The expedition was successful and the Indians with whom the white men were living were so grateful to them for subduing the troublesome Iroquois that they consented to guide them into the unexplored districts to the west.

Accordingly, when the spring of 1659 loosened the ice in the great rivers and lakes, Radisson and Grosseillers, with their band of Indians, were among the prairie tribes of the Mississippi —the first white men to reach that mighty river.

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What they heard from the Cree and Sioux concerning the great northern sea, Hudson, Bay, made them desirous of finding it for themselves. But they first explored the southwestern section of the country then returned to Quebec with a goodly supply of furs. They did not remain here long, however, but set out again, heading for the north, with a band of northern Indians.

The Iroquois gave them a great deal of trouble, and constant fighting and skirmishing hindered them. At last, in October, they saw the waters of Lake Superior stretching out before them, and by the end of November they left the western end of the lake and struck out toward the northwest. Cold weather was on them and they could not continue. It was necessary to get into winter quarters.

The two white men were alone. Their boats had been of no use when the rivers began to freeze and there was not enough snow for snowshoes. So the Crees, who had accompanied them, were sent back to bring carriers to move the goods and stores they had with them. Radisson and Grosseillers were in the heart of an unknown country, somewhere west of the present site of Duluth, surrounded by hostile Indians.

Protection was essential. So they set about to build a fort for themselves.

They chose the bank of a river and built a triangular fort with "the base at the waterside. The walls were of unbarked logs; the roof of thatched branches interlaced; the door at the riverside. In the middle of the earth floor, so that the smoke would curl up where the branches formed a funnel or chimney, was the fire. On the right of the fire two hewn logs, overlaid with pine boughs, made a bed. On the left another hewn log acted as a table."

The fort was now completed. But what use is a fort without sentries or soldiers to guard it? With only two men to be the entire garrison what chance was there of rest or sleep? How be on the lookout for the Indians who might creep up silently and stealthily to the very walls?

Radisson put his nimble wits to work and finally evolved a plan. He strung carefully concealed cords through the grass and branches around the fort. To these bells were fastened, and the bells were the sentries. The white men could now sleep soundly without fear of approach. Several times in the night the two men were awakened by the ringing of the bells. But it proved to be wild animals of the forest who

had smelled the meat Radisson had brought back from the hunt, and had jumped on the roof of interlaced branches to get in at it.

The Indians, of course, soon heard of the arrival of the strangers in their midst. They came to the fort but Pierre and his brother-in-law did not allow them to enter lest they ascertain the weakness of the fort and kill the traders for the sake of their firearms and other belongings. All the supplies they were not using were hidden in a hole on the other side of the river, there to be out of harm's way.

But even then there were plenty of things to arouse the cupidity of the savages—kettles, knives, the traders' guns and ammunition. Radisson perfected another scheme. He rolled gunpowder in twisted tubes of birch-bark and ran a circle of this around the fort. Putting a torch to the birch he surprised the Indians by displaying to them a circle of fire running along the ground in a series of jumps.

This was a marvelous sight to witness. The Indians had never seen anything like it before. The circle of fire guarded the two lone white men as well as a detachment of soldiers could have done. The savages believed they were magicians

who were skilled in all manner of mysteries, and the traders were left in peace.

They remained in the fort, the first trading-post to be built that far West, until the Crees returned. Then they took their supplies and pushed farther west and north. A winter of unusual severity set in, with a great amount of snow. Game was scarce and the Indians died by scores, five hundred perishing of hunger. The two white men were more like walking skeletons than anything else when spring came. But, with the opening of the rivers, game became plentiful and the danger of famine was over. They once more continued their journeying, discovering new lands and reaching the great northern sea—in all probability Hudson Bay.

In 1663 Radisson and Grosseillers, with hundreds of Indians, paddled a fleet of canoes, heavily laden with furs, to Montreal. The Indians came to trade; the two white men to bring the furs they had collected during the past two years back to their homes.

Unfortunately the governor of the colony did not appreciate what Radisson and his brother-in-law had done in opening up trade in the far West and North. Because they had gone without permission from him he seized most of the

furs, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in the money of our time, and even put the two explorers in prison for a while. Such ungrateful treatment caused Radisson and Grosseillers to leave New France and go to England, where their services were enlisted by the English.

Pierre Gaultier De La Verendrye

The chill winds of late fall warned Pierre de la Vérendrye that winter was approaching. He had reached Lake of the Woods and the Cree Indians with him wished to camp there because the many islands afforded a safe shelter from marauding bands of Sioux, the "tigers of the plains" as they were called.

La Vérendrye selected a site on a peninsula which jutted out into the lake. He had his men cut down trees to build a fort which he called Fort St. Charles. He tells us it was "an enclosure made with four rows of posts from twelve to fifteen feet in height, in the form of an oblong square within which are a few rough cabins constructed of logs and clay, and covered with bark." Around it he planted wheat—the first wheat to be sown in the west.

That winter La Vérendrye remained at the fort. One of his sons, with a picked band of men,

continued the march through the wilderness searching for another spot on which to build a fort. They travelled on snowshoes for four hundred miles until they came to the mouth of the Winnipeg River and here they erected Fort Maurepas.

La Vérendrye now thought he would surely be able to find the long-looked-for Western Sea. Unfortunately he had no support from the Government in France nor from his partners in Montreal—merchants whose only aim was to make money out of the fur trade. They did not care whether the explorer was successful in extending the domain of France into new lands; all they thought about was the rich revenue they hoped to receive. When furs did not come back to Montreal as plentifully as they expected they withheld money for supplies. La Vérendrye was obliged to return to Montreal to get the food, ammunition and other things he needed; presents were necessary also for the new tribes of Indians he would meet.

He hurried back to Fort St. Charles, the provisions moving slowly after him. That winter the little garrison nearly starved to death. In the spring the Indians came to trade but there was nothing to be given in exchange for their

furs as the supplies had not yet arrived. La Vérendrye sent his son, Jean, with three light canoes to Fort Michilimachinac. The Crees were friendly to the white men and no one thought of danger. However, a band of Sioux stole upon the travellers as they camped. Taken unawares they were at the mercy of their fierce assailants and were killed. The story is told that the Sioux were taking vengeance for an affront which they thought had been offered by the Frenchmen some months before. A friendly party of Sioux coming to inspect Fort St. Charles had been shot at by some Chippewa Indians.

"Who fire on us?" the Sioux had cried.

"The French" was the reply the Chippewas had shouted back and the Sioux had believed them. The "tigers of the plains" intended to have revenge and when they came across the trail of Jean de la Vérendrye and his men they followed them. At the first opportunity they massacred the entire company.

This was a terrible blow to La Vérendrye, the elder. The Crees urged him to retaliate but he refused. Although he had lost his eldest son and also his nephew, who had died that spring, he resolved to push on with his remaining three sons. In 1738 they came to the mouth of the

Assiniboine River, the first white men to stand on the spot where the city of Winnipeg is now situated, and from there they proceeded up the Assiniboine River. The Indians told tales of a great Western Sea and of mountains which lay between the plains and the coast. La Vérendrye was eager to discover the way to the salt water.

The Assiniboine Indians guided him to the homes of the Mandans who lived near the Missouri River. When they came within sight of the village La Vérendrye had his men formed in military order and his son François marched ahead bearing aloft the French flag. The Indians insisted that La Vérendrye should arrive in state and so they carried him on their shoulders to the village. The Frenchmen fired a volley from their guns which amazed the Mandans. This was the first time they had ever seen white men and the thunderous roar of the muskets impressed them with a sense of the visitors' importance. La Vérendrye was conducted inside the fortified village and treated as a great white chief.

La Vérendrye tried to find out what the Mandans knew about the great Western Sea but as he had no knowledge of their language it was difficult to ask the questions he wished.

He decided to leave two of his men with the Mandans to learn their language and with the remainder he set out for Fort Reine. On the way he became very ill. The weather was bitterly cold, and blinding blizzards hindered their progress. They had no fuel to make a fire, but sick as he was La Vérendrye had to keep on for otherwise he would have perished. It was February, 1739, before Fort La Reine was reached.

"Never in my life" La Vérendrye relates of this trip, "did I endure so much misery, pain and fatigue as on this journey."

La Vérendrye was not able himself to return to the country of the Mandans but in April, 1742, he sent his two sons, François and Pierre. The two young men had many adventures before they came to the land occupied by the Bow Indians —many days' journey from the Mandans. The Bows were the only tribe who did not fear the Snake Indians and as the latter inhabited the district which lay between them and the Western Sea the Vérendrye brothers wished to obtain guides from the Bow to lead them through the Snake country.

The chief of the Bow Indians welcomed François and Pierre and offered to do all he could

to help them. Unfortunately at that time preparations were underway for a fight with the Snakes. The chief said to the Vérendryes:

"Soon you will hear the war song; we are going to march to the high mountains near the coast to meet the enemy. Do not fear to come with us. There you may get a sight of the sea."

François and Pierre accompanied them. There was a vast number, nearly two thousand braves and their families. Finally on New Year's Day, 1743, they sighted the mountains, the first white men to view those lofty ranges which barred the way to the Pacific Ocean.

Leaving Pierre at the camp with the women and children to prevent the Frenchmen's ammunition and other luggage from being stolen, François moved on with the warriors. Bow scouts met the army and reported the encampment of the Snakes deserted. At once the Bows jumped to the conclusion that their enemy had departed in order to attack the Bow camp during the absence of the war-party. They would not believe that the Snakes had run away from fear of the approaching braves, which really was the case, but were certain it was a trick being played upon them. In a panic they retreated pell-mell.

François wrote an account of this happening. He said, "I was extremely mortified not to be able to ascend the mountains but there was no help for it and we had to return. It was a wild flight, each one looking out for himself. Our horses, though good, were tired and would only eat occasionally. I kept at the side of the chief and my two Frenchmen followed. We had gone a long distance when turning around I saw no sign of them. I immediately gave rein to my horse and went with all possible speed to find them. At last I discovered them at the end of an island feeding their horses, but at the same moment I caught sight of fifteen Indians carrying shields before them and creeping stealthily out of the woods. They saw me coming and advanced toward me until I let drive a few musket shots at them and they scampered off.

"We stayed there that night and on the next morning set out to catch up with our retreating friends. The prairies were so hard that the horses' hoofs left no mark. We did not know whither we were going but trusted to luck and finally arrived at the village on February 9th, the second day after our flight. We found that the chief had been very worried about us and had gone hither and thither fearing we were lost."

This ended the expedition across the mountains. The Vérendryes returned to the banks of the Missouri and before leaving this part of the country they buried a leaden tablet on the crest of a hill. This tablet was discovered in 1913 at Fort Pierre, South Dakota, and the Latin inscription on it is an evidence of the explorations of these two daring young men.

When they returned to Fort La Reine on July 2, 1743, their father was relieved to see them. He had feared for their safety as they had left a year ago that spring.

The Vérendryes established a chain of forts through this hitherto unknown part of the great west. When La Vérendrye died, his sons were prepared to carry on his work and explore still farther west. But the governor of the colony appointed another to succeed La Vérendrye. His sons were travellers experienced in the ways of the wild and versed in the languages of the various Indian tribes. They should have been sent as heads of the exploring party, but those in power sought only to enrich themselves through the fur trade, and the brave La Vérendrye brothers were thrust aside.

General Wolfe

James Wolfe, the hero of Louisbourg, was the general in command of the British forces. He stood on the south bank of the St. Lawrence River, gazing through his telescope at the opposite shore. He and the officers with him were dressed as grenadiers so that their high rank would not be noticed.

"We MUST take Quebec," Wolfe said to himself. "If we could scale that cliff I think we could do it. But whereabouts can my men find a footing?"

Montcalm, the leader of the French, had declared that a hundred men could hold the cliff against the whole British army. For three months the Britsh had been trying to capture Quebec, and so far without success. The natural defences of the place made it extremely difficult to attack.

General Wolfe continued to study the shore

Wolfe landing at Louisburg.
(*Courtesy Public Archives of Canada*)

and the line of cliffs arising above it. His gaze was directed to one particular spot where he could make out a depression in the steep surface. This spot was only a short distance from Quebec, and Wolfe knew instantly that if he could get his men up that narrow cutting he would be in an excellent position from which to take the city.

The zig-zag path up the wooded precipice was guarded by a French outpost. Wolfe could see tents pitched at the edge of the cliff. He counted one, two, three . . . . twelve. As there were no more it was evident the French believed the cliff at that point to be safe from invasion, and had not troubled to station a very strong guard.

For some time Wolfe kept his telescope sighted on the Anse du Foulon, now called Wolfe's Cove, while he formed daring plans for an attack. It was a risky thing he was considering and the success of the venture would depend on secrecy, so he decided to keep his own counsel. Then his plans could not be talked over and the French would not hear about them.

Wolfe had made an attack at the Falls of Montmorency but this had been a failure. He had fortified Point Lévis directly across from Quebec and from there had trained his guns

on to the Lower Town. But in spite of a steady bombardment the stronghold of the French had not yielded.

His men were becoming restive. It was now the month of September and before long the river would be frozen and the fleet of British ships imprisoned for the winter. Wolfe was resolved to make a final attack. Though weak from sickness, his indomitable spirit would not allow him to give up. He was determined to try again.

There appeared to be only one way, and that was to land his soldiers at the foot of the cove now known by his name, and have them ascend the cutting that led to the top of the precipice. It was a desperate measure and one which would fail if the enemy were aware of their coming. For this reason Wolfe kept the location of the landing spot to himself until the last moment. He laid his plans carefully, and did not overlook the smallest detail necessary for carrying them out.

The French had twice tried to destroy the British fleet. Once they had sent seven fire-ships among them. But those in charge of the fire-ships had set them off too soon; and although they had made a terrifying sight as the flames

blazed in the darkness, they had burned out before they had reached the fleet and little harm had been done.

Later on in the summer they had sent another flotilla of fire-rafts. This time the officer in command knew his business. He was cool and collected, and the rafts had been set on fire at exactly the right moment. Fortunately, the British ships had been able to slip anchor and get out of the way. The sailors had jumped into barges and had heroically towed the flaming rafts to shore, where they had burned without doing damage to the British vessels.

Montcalm had entrenched himself behind the walls of the fort which crowned the hill. All Wolfe's efforts to draw him forth to do battle had failed and so far the British had not been able to climb the cliff.

On the 12th of September, 1759, General Wolfe issued a last proclamation to his soldiers, telling them of the proposed attack. He said, "A vigorous blow struck by the army at this juncture may determine the fate of Canada. Our troops below are in readiness to join us, all the light artillery and tools are embarked at the point of Lévis and the troops will land where the French seem least to expect it. The first

body that gets on shore is to march directly to the enemy and drive them from any little post they may occupy; the officers must be careful that the succeeding bodies do not, by any mistake, fire upon those who go before them . . . . the officers and men will remember what their country expects of them . . . ."

Even now the exact spot of landing was only made known to a few of the officers. On no account must an inkling of the plan reach Montcalm's ears.

Wolfe ordered a detachment of sailors and soldiers despatched below Quebec, so that the French would think the main attack was going to be at that point. Montcalm was misled by this manoeuvre and directed his men to be sent there.

Meanwhile Wolfe and his army had sailed up the river some distance above Quebec. About midnight, Wolfe had a lantern placed in the main top-mast shrouds of his ship. When the men saw this signal they embarked in boats and floated down the river with the ebb tide.

In the first of the boats were General Wolfe and the twenty-four men who had volunteered for this post of danger.

Presently they were hailed by a French senti-

nel on shore, who cried *"Qui vive?"* (Who goes there).

Quick as a flash one of the men on Wolfe's boat who spoke French answered in that language, *"La France."*

This satisfied the sentinel for he thought the boat was bringing provisions to the beleagured garrison at Quebec.

Shortly afterwards they were again hailed, *"Que vive?"* by another sentinel.

The soldier gave the same answer and the boat was permitted to pass. Provisions were sadly needed by the French army and the boat gliding so quietly downstream was mistaken for one bringing in food stuffs unsuspected by the blockading fleet.

When Wolfe's Cove was reached the men landed. Their guns were strapped to their backs, for they needed their arms free to assist them in climbing the steep hillside.

While the men pulled themselves up the face of the cliff by holding on to branches of trees and shrubs General Wolfe remained on the shore of the cove. He listened and listened. Would the brave fellows reach the top in safety, or

Montcalm risking his life to save English prisoners from the murderous fury of the savages after the capture of Fort William Henry in 1757.

(Courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

would the guard stationed at the outpost hear their approach and fall upon them? It was a moment of great anxiety for Wolfe. So much depended on this attempt. If it were not successful the British would have to return to England without having gained their purpose.

He could hear nothing but the murmur of the wind sighing among the trees, and the rush of the stream which flowed over the cutting in the rock. At last came the sound of shots, and the "Hurrah!" of his men. "Ah!" he thought. "They have taken the outpost!"

The next instant, at his command, the main part of the army jumped from the boats. Sappers went ahead to clear away trees and undergrowth. However, many of the soldiers in their eagerness to reach the top did not wait for the path to be cleared, but scrambled up holding on to trees and rocks.

By six o'clock a British force of five thousand men was drawn up on the Heights. Wolfe selected a smooth piece of ground—the Plains of Abraham—and marshalled his army there. The French, under Montcalm, came out to meet them and in a short, but decisive battle the French were defeated. Four days afterwards the sur-

render of Quebec practically ended French rule in Canada.

During the battle of the Plains of Abraham both Wolfe and Montcalm received wounds from which they died. Some years later a monument was erected near the Chateau Frontenac at Quebec in honor of these two brave commanders. On one side the name of Wolfe is engraved and on the other that of Montcalm.

Sir Isaac Brock

It was not yet daylight. The October morning was cold; rain fell in a steady drizzle. But Sir Isaac Brock, mounted on his trusty horse, did not heed the weather.

He had been roused by the distant roar of guns. What was happening on the river bank? The enemy must have begun the attack for which he had been looking, but whereabouts had they landed? They had not struck the blow at Fort George from where he had just come.

Anxious to reach the place of danger, Brock galloped on in the darkness. He splashed through mud and mire urging his splendid steed to greater exertion. Every moment the sound of firing became louder and louder. On and on he went, riding furiously. Suddenly out of the misty gloom he saw the figure of a man on horseback. It was one of his lieutenants who was coming post haste to tell him the invaders had crossed the river.

Brock did not pause. He waved for the lieutenant to turn about and follow him. Presently the two horses were travelling neck to neck and Brock learned how the invading army had centred their forces at Queenston Heights.

The two bodies of soldiers were facing each other along a front of forty miles, and although an attack had been expected no one knew at what point it was to be made until the American militia, having put off in flat-bottomed boats, had landed on the Canadian shore of the Niagara River.

When Brock heard that Queenston was threatened he sent the lieutenant back to Fort George with orders for the troops there to hasten to his assistance. Then he pushed on alone.

Before long he came to Brown's Point and as he passed the company of York Volunteers stationed there, he waved his hand in greeting and shouted, "Push on, brave York Volunteers."

Dawn was now breaking. His noble horse carried him swiftly toward the scene of conflict. Halfway up the hillside a gun, an eighteen-pounder manned by eight artillerymen, was placed in a position commanding the river. Brock began the ascent but had scarcely reached the cannon when he heard firing from the crest

of the hill. The enemy had climbed a steep path used by fishermen and had gained the summit. But as Brock and the eight artillerymen were no match for them, he ordered the gun to be spiked and a retreat made to the village.

But Brock was determined to regain possession of Queenston Heights. Putting himself at the head of a small force he led the way up the hillside. It was a daring and dangerous venture. Bravely they went on. Brock, conspicuous in his uniform, his tall figure plainly visible in the van, was singled out by the soldiers who held the top of the hill and one of them fired the shot which felled Brock to the ground, killing him almost instantly.

The loss of their beloved general was a severe blow. He had won the hearts of his men not only by his courage and skill but by the kindly spirit he had always shown in his dealings with them. They were grief stricken as they carried his lifeless body to the village at the foot of the hill. But his death inspired them to fight even more fiercely. "Avenge the General" was their cry.

That afternoon the battle of Queenston Heights was fought and the invaders driven out. Upper Canada was saved.

When war had been declared on June 18th, 1812, Brock had been in command of Upper Canada's military and civil affairs. He was wise and able; under his direction forts were strengthened, soldiers recruited, and preparations made to repel an invasion. The Indian chief, Tecumseh, was much impressed with the appearance of Isaac Brock when he met the latter in council near Detroit. The English general was equally taken with his Indian ally. He said when speaking of him afterwards, "A more sagacious or more gallant warrior does not, I believe, exist."

The chief was dressed in a fringed hunting suit of buckskin, with leggings, moccasins and mantle of the same material; in his belt he carried a silver-mounted tomahawk and a knife encased in a leather holder. Turning to the warriors of his tribe Tecumseh pointed to Brock and said in his own language, "This is a man!"

Brock told Tecumseh of his plans against Detroit where Hull the American leader had his headquarters. The chief spread a roll of birch bark on the ground and using his scalping knife he scratched a map of the opposite shore. He indicated the streams, the woods and the position of Fort Detroit. This gave Brock a clear out-

line of the country. He planned to cross the St. Clair River and carry the war into the enemy's camp.

It was a bold move, for Brock's forces were small in comparison with those against whom he was advancing. Hull was strongly entrenched behind a well-built fort surrounded by a wide moat. A high wall bristled with cannon and 24-pounders were trained on the line of approach Brock had chosen.

Brock sent a letter to General Hull in which he wrote, "The force at my disposal authorizes me to require of you the immediate surrender of Fort Detroit. It is far from my inclination to join in a war of extermination but you must be aware that the numerous body of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops will be beyond my control the moment the contest commences."

Hull refused to surrender and Brock, undaunted by the difficulties before him, gave orders to begin the offensive. The Indian allies under the command of Tecumseh crossed the river in the darkness, and Brock's soldiers embarked at daybreak.

Hull believed the attacking army was larger than it really was. The confidence and boldness

The meeting of Brock and Tecumseh.
(*Courtesy Public Archives of Canada*)

displayed by the advancing body of soldiers made him think they were supported by strong reserves. The hideous yelling of the savages sounded as though it proceeded from the throats of a host of Indians. He made up his mind to surrender and sent a white flag to Brock to inform him of his decision. For his part in this victory Brock was knighted by the King.

Isaac Brock was a gallant general and the men under his command had complete confidence in him. Tecumseh paid him tribute as a courageous intrepid leader. He said to him after the fall of Fort Detroit, "I am happy to shake by the hand a brave brother warrior. In crossing the river to attack the enemy . . . . you were among the first who jumped on land. Your bold and sudden movement frightened the enemy and you compelled them to surrender to half their own force."

At Queenston Heights there now stands a monument erected in honor of Sir Isaac Brock, while a cairn marks the spot where he fell.

Samuel Hearne

The Barren Lands were covered with snow. Battling against the fierce north wind Samuel Hearne struggled on. He was bent on reaching his goal, the Far-Off Metal River and the northwest passage to the Orient by way of Hudson Bay.

The Indian guides who accompanied him were not satisfactory. They led him and his two white companions across a most desolate, wind-swept tract of country where the stunted shrubs were not sufficient for fuel. They were without means of making a fire large enough to keep them warm; their tents were of little use because wood for tent poles could not be obtained. Hearne in his record of this journey says:

"It was scarcely ever in our power to make any other defence against the weather than by digging a hole in the snow down to the moss, wrapping ourselves up in our clothing, and ly-

ing down with our sledges set up edgeways to windward."

To make matters worse the Indian guides behaved treacherously. When the party reached a wooded part where game was more abundant, the Indians went on ahead and killed what they wanted for their own use, leaving Hearne and his men only a few partridges to shoot. Sometimes their rations for a day would be only half a partridge and this was not enough to keep them in health and strength on such a hard trip.

Finally the Indians stole all of the supplies they could lay their hands on and deserted. Hearne says they "set off towards the southwest, making the woods ring with their laughter, and left us to consider our unhappy situation near two hundred miles from Prince of Wales Fort, all heavily laden and our strength and spirits greatly reduced by hunger and fatigue."

It was with great difficulty they made their way back to the Fort. However, in spite of the hardships he had undergone, Hearne, three months later, started off again, this time accompanied by only five Indians, two Crees and three Chipewyans.

When spring came the snow melted. Sledges and snowshoes were now of no use and so were

left behind. Hearne and his Indians had to carry the things they needed on their backs. The explorer's own load was heavy; a bag of clothes; a box with necessary books and papers; compass; quadrant and stand; hatchet and knives; other tools; and presents intended for the Indians he would meet on the way.

Food became scarce. At one time all they had to eat for seven days was a handful of wild berries, a few pieces of old leather and burnt bones. After a while, however, the party reached the Kazan River and there ran into a band of Northern Indians who, in canoes, were spearing caribou crossing the river. Meat was plentiful and Hearne's guides declared they would not be able to find the Coppermine, or Far-Off Metal River, that summer. They preferred to stay where there was abundance of game.

Hearne could not proceed northward alone. He spent the rest of that summer of 1770 travelling with a large band of roving Indians, the only white man in the company.

One day the wind blew down his quadrant while he was making observations. With that valuable instrument broken Hearne knew it was useless to attempt penetrating into the Arctic

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regions. He decided to return to Fort Prince of Wales.

Unfortunately a number of Northern Indians stole almost all his belongings. Hearne tells us; "Nothing can exceed the cool deliberation of the villians. A committee of them entered my tent. The ringleader seated himself on my left hand . . . . They asked me for several articles which I had not . . . . One of them put his hand on my baggage and asked if it was mine. Before I could answer in the affirmative he and the rest of his companions had all my treasure spread on the ground. One took one thing and one another, till at last nothing was left but the empty bag which they permitted me to keep."

In September the weather turned very cold. The Northern Indians had garments made of skin to keep them warm but they would not allow Hearne or the Crees with him to have any. In consequence they suffered bitterly from the cold. They had no snowshoes either, and walking through the deep snow was extremely difficult. It is doubtful if Hearne would have reached the Fort had it not been for an happy encounter with an Indian chief, himself heading for the Hudson's Bay Company's post.

One evening when Hearne was staggering

through a blinding snow-storm he almost ran into a tall figure who proved to be the Indian chief, Matonabbee. Hearne told him his story and Matonabbee at once befriended him. He gave him a suit of otter skins as protection from the biting cold winds, and had food prepared for him.

Under guidance of this friendly Indian Hearne returned to Fort Prince of Wales. One would think that after these two trips and the hardships he had endured Hearne would not care to brave the unexplored northern wilderness again. But not so! He was not shaken in his purpose. In less than two weeks he began his third journey to the distant north. This time he was fortunate in having Matonabbee with him. Matonabbee had asked, "White man, will you search again for the mountain of copper?"

On Hearne replying in the affirmative the Indian chief had said grandly: "I, Matonabbee, have journeyed to the Far-Off Metal River, and if the Great Chief at the Fort will consent, I myself will guide thee hither."

Before the little party had gone many days they came to a *cache* where Matonabbee had stored provisions. Here they expected to re-

plenish their store of food, but to their great disappointment they found that someone had been there ahead of them and taken all the provisions. But no one thought of turning back. On they plodded across great white tracts of snow.

Christmas Day came! There was no roast turkey; no plum pudding; no mince pie! Not even a small cake of pemmican! Not a scrap of food anywhere, nothing but snow water to sustain them. Still they did not give up, but kept steadily moving forward on their snowshoes.

Fortunately, early in the new year they noticed tracks of caribou in the Barren Lands. The herds were making their yearly pilgrimage to their summer feeding grounds. There was now no scarcity of game. Bands of Indians joined them. Hearne learned to his dismay that they were planning a raid on the Eskimos.

By the 21st of June Hearne had crossed the Arctic Circle. No longer did the sun set at night. Here a new tribe of Indians, the Copper Indians, were met. They were very friendly and gave the newcomers a feast. They had never seen a white man before and gazed at Hearne in wonder. He says:—"It was curious to see how they flocked about me and expressed as much de-

sire to examine me from top to toe as a naturalist would a strange animal. They, however, found me to be a perfect human being except in the color of my hair and eyes; the former, they said, was like the stained hair of a buffalo's tail and the latter, being light, were like those of a gull."

On July 13th Hearne reached the Coppermine, or Far-Off Metal River. A few days afterwards the war-party stole upon an Eskimo camp and killed men, women and children. Sick at heart, Hearne was powerless to prevent them. What could one white man do to control a horde of blood-thirsty savages?

Not more than eight miles away from the scene of the massacre lay the Arctic Ocean. On July 17th Hearne stood on its shores, the first white man to reach that northern ocean by land.

He had now achieved his goal. The great mountain of copper was not found but he had explored the Coppermine River. He had seen the Arctic Ocean and was convinced that there was no navigable north west passage to Asia by way of the Hudson Bay.

On the return trip to Fort Prince of Wales Hearne visited Great Slave Lake and Slave

River. He was the first white man to explore those districts.

The Hudson's Bay Company rewarded him for the discoveries he had made by appointing him governor of Fort Prince of Wales.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie

On the ninth of May, 1793, Alexander Mackenzie with one white man, Alexander Mackay, six Indian boatmen and two Indian hunters pushed off in a birch bark canoe to reach the western sea—the vast Pacific Ocean—if they could. No white man had ever crossed the Rocky Mountains in the far north; none had stood on the shore of what is now British Columbia and viewed from there the mighty ocean. Indians had carried tales of the gigantic mountains that towered many thousand feet toward the sky. They told of a great body of salt water and Mackenzie's mind and imagination had been fired by these tales.

It was not only the desire for adventure which inspired him. There was another reason. He wanted this unexplored land to be part of his country. Other explorers were finding new lands and claiming them for the nations to whom they belonged and someone was going to hoist

a flag over the northern and western part of North America. As Alexander Mackenzie had lived in Canada since he was sixteen years of age he counted himself a Canadian, and longed to extend the borders of Canada from coast to coast.

The frail canoe had to force its way against the powerful current of the Peace River, swollen with melted snow and ice. It required all the skill these hardy men of the north possessed to fight against the turbulent stream. Before long they came to mountains where the river flowed in a torrent between two high towering walls. What should they do? It was impossible to *portage*: there was no place on the steep cliffs where canoe and luggage could be carried. But Mackenzie was not daunted. He tells us in his journal:

"We now, with infinite difficulty passed along the foot of a rock, which, fortunately, was not an hard stone, so that we were enabled to cut steps in it for the distance of twenty feet; from which at the hazard of my life I leaped on a small rock below, where I received those who followed me on my shoulders. In this manner four of us passed and dragged up the canoe."

Throughout that day rapid after rapid was

met and at five o'clock they came to a spot where the river was nothing but a succession of cascades. The luggage was taken out of the canoe to make it easier to tow, but even then it was uncertain whether the light skiff could be pulled through safely.

"The agitation of the water was so great," says Mackenzie, "that a wave striking on the bow of the canoe broke the line and filled us with inexpressible dismay, as it appeared impossible that the vessel could escape from being dashed to pieces and those who were in her from perishing. Another wave drove her out of the tumbling water so that the men were enabled to bring her ashore. The men were in such a state from their late alarm that it would not only have been unavailing but imprudent to have proposed any further progress at present, particularly as the river above us, as far as we could see, was one white sheet of foaming water."

While the men made camp for the night Mackenzie examined the river. He found a stretch of rapids and cascades which no canoe could possibly navigate. The only course was to *portage,* but could it be done? Could they carry a thirty foot canoe and the luggage over the

mountain cliffs that formed the walls of the gorge? Worn out with fatigue, his feet bruised and sore, he returned to his party to consider what could be done.

He would not give up; onward they must go. He decided to make a road by felling trees, cutting them in such a way that the trunks formed a barricade at the edge of the precipice. Along this narrow passageway they pulled the canoe. It was extremely hard work, back breaking, laborious. At the end of a day they had only covered about three miles. The men were discouraged. Was it worth while to advance when the odds were so great? Would it not be better to turn back? Why try to navigate a stream as swift and dangerous as the Peace River?

But Mackenzie urged them to persevere and himself helped in the work. Cheered and encouraged by his example they continued to fell trees and warp the canoe along. "About two hundred yards below us," Mackenzie writes, "the stream rushed with an astonishing but silent velocity between perpendicular rocks which are not more than thirty-five yards asunder . . . . At a small distance below the first of these rocks the channel widens in a kind of zig-zag progression; and it was really terrible

to behold with what infinite force the water drives against the rocks on one side, and with what impetuous strength it is repelled to the other."

When this series of rapids was passed they took again to the canoe. For days they struggled on, pitting their strength and skill against the powers of the wilderness; making *portages* when the river became impassable; navigating rapids and swift currents where often the light bark was on the verge of being demolished. Once the boatmen, while Mackenzie and part of his men were on ahead reconnoitering, disappeared with the canoe. They had made up their minds to return and leave the others to their fate. But Mackenzie and Mackay with their trusty Indian hunters set out in pursuit and after considerable search found the truant men. Mackenzie said nothing about their desertion nor did he contradict the improbable story they told of the canoe having sprung a leak, but he resolved not to let them out of his sight again until the Divide had been crossed and he was on the west side of the mountains.

When Mackenzie reached the source of the Peace River he made a short *portage* to a small tarn that emptied into a river flowing south-

wards. "Here" he says "two streams tumble down the rocks from the right and lose themselves in the lake we had left; while two others fall from the opposite heights and glide into the lake which we were approaching; this being the highest point of land dividing these waters, and we are now going with the stream." Mackenzie had crossed the Divide, the first white man who had ever done so!

When he embarked on the river, later named the Fraser, he was puzzled at the direction in which it flowed. He did not know that it wound for miles and miles among the mountains before it turned west and headed for the Ocean. However, he decided to find out whither it led. In its upper stretches the Fraser is a wild brawling stream, racing between high mountain walls. The little party had to run dangerous rapids and *portage* past roaring cascades. Mackenzie found out from the Indians he met that this river would take them to the sea but that many long weary days would pass before they could reach it. But they told him there was a short cut through the remaining mountain peaks. He at once seized the opportunity of shortening their journey. The canoe and its contents were *cached* and the men set out on foot.

The overland trip was difficult and dangerous; night after night they were exhausted from their strenuous labors. Although surrounded by snow-clad mountains they were tormented by swarms of mosquitoes. The weather was sometimes very hot and sometimes very cold. There were violent thunderstorms and showers of enormous hailstones. Moreover the Indian guides continued to give trouble. But Mackenzie's indomitable courage did not fail in spite of these trials. He exhorted his men to continue, reminding them of the courage and resolution which was the peculiar boast of the North men, and "urged the honor of conquering disasters."

After eleven days of forced marching they came to a river leading to the sea. As they were swept along with the swift current Mackenzie strained his eyes to catch a glimpse of his goal —the Pacific Ocean. About eight o'clock on the morning of July 20th the river was left behind and the sea opened out before him.

The natives of the coast were not friendly so Mackenzie and his men took up their position on a ledge of rock where they could defend themselves against attack. It was here that Mackenzie, before beginning the difficult return trip, wrote with vermilion paint on the face of the cliff

these memorable words: "Alexander Mackenzie from Canada by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three."

Simon Fraser

Two large birch-bark canoes rounded the point and headed for the shore where Carrier Indians were camped near the outlet of Stuart's Lake. The boatmen were singing as they paddled and when the Indians saw the canoes and heard the strange song in an unknown tongue they called one to another: "Do they come as friends or foes? Is it a war-party advancing upon us?"

They were uncertain what to do. Just then one of the Carriers who had met white men before, shouted: "They are friends." He jumped into a canoe, hurried to meet them, and went aboard.

Those on shore, watching, saw his empty canoe bobbing up and down on the waves and they were afraid the strangers had done him harm.

"They have killed him," they exclaimed, "make ready, ye warriers! Away with the women!"

The men waited with bows and arrows until the canoes drew nearer. Then they saw that their comrade was not killed as they had feared. He called out that the white men had come to pay them a friendly visit. Weapons were dropped, women and children returned from the shelter of the woods, and they all crowded around Simon Fraser and John Stuart and their companions.

The first thing Fraser's men did was to fire a volley from their guns into the air. This made a strong impression upon the Indians who fell on their faces in awe and wonder. Presents of tobacco and soap were given them. These were articles they had never seen before. The men tasted the tobacco and finding it bitter threw it away. The visitors lighted their pipes to show the proper use of the weed and the Indians thought they must be ghosts who "were still full of the fire wherewith they had been cremated." The women did not know what to do with the soap. Thinking it might be fat, they began to eat it and as a result, foamed at the mouth to their great amazement and alarm.

Working in the interests of the North-west Fur Company, Fraser built a fort here which he called Fort St. James. For two years he traded

with the Indians during which time he erected Fort Fraser and made trips into the surrounding country. Orders came to explore the Tacouche Tesse (which was supposed to be the Columbia River). The Company hoped to find a suitable route to the coast for their furs.

In the spring of 1808 he started off with four canoes accompanied by John Stuart, Jules Quesnel, and nineteen boatmen. Before long they were on a part of the river hitherto unexplored. As the canoes swept along no one knew what lay before them.

Suddenly the river narrowed until it was not more than forty or fifty yards wide. Steep precipices rose on either side, and the roaring foaming water rushed between these high walls.

The Indians warned Fraser not to go on, saying that the rapids were too fierce and wild for any canoe to go through in safety. But Fraser was not willing to abandon the expedition. He had been sent to follow the course of this unknown river to its mouth and he was not discouraged when confronted with difficulties.

Five of the most skilful boatmen set out in a canoe to run the rapids while the rest of the party watched them anxiously, fearing they would be lost in the raging torrent. The frail

craft started off bravely but the force of the current and the swift swirls rendered the boatmen helpless. They managed to keep the canoe from capsizing but that was all they could do. The waves tossed it hither and thither at will.

A whirlpool reached out, caught the little boat and waltzed it around dizzily.

The watchers on shore held their breath. Presently they saw the whirling waters fling the canoe against a low rock. At once the men jumped out on to the ledge and at the same time managed to keep the canoe from getting away. But what should they do now? To go any further down the river was out of the question nor could they return to their starting point above the rapids.

Fraser and his men went to their rescue. He tells the story himself. "The bank was extremely high and steep and we had to plunge our daggers into the ground to check our speed as otherwise we were disposed to slide into the river. We cut steps into the declivity, fastened a line to the front of the canoe, with which some of the men ascended in order to haul it up, while the others supported it upon their arms. In this manner our situation was most precarious: our lives hung as it were upon a thread, as the failure

of the line or a false step of one of the men might have hurled the whole of us into Eternity. However, we fortunately cleared the bank before dark."

Fraser was now in a quandary. It was impossible to run the rapids. Either they must make their way across the steep cliff or give up the trip.

With heavy loads on their backs the men struggled over the portage. Tired and exhausted they arrived at the end of the gorge. The canoes had to be brought over but they managed this difficult undertaking. Finally the party set out once more on a river comparatively smooth.

However, it was only a short time before they came to a succession of rapids where whirlpools yawned threateningly. Once more the canoes had to be unloaded and the goods carried overland.

"This task was as difficult and dangerous as going by water, the men being obliged to pass on a declivity which formed the border of a huge precipice, on loose stones and gravel which constantly gave way under their feet. One of them, who had lost the path, got into a most intricate

and perilous position. With a large package on his back he got so engaged among the rocks that he could neither move forward nor backward, nor yet unload himself without immediate danger. Seeing this poor fellow in such an awkward and dangerous predicament I crawled, not without great risk, to his assistance and saved his life by causing his load to drop from his back over the precipice into the river. This carrying place, two miles long, had so shattered our shoes that our feet became quite sore and full of blisters."

They continued to follow the stream, sometimes riding the canoes through rapids, and sometimes carrying them over the land. On the morning of June the ninth, 1808, they came to the worst rapid they had yet met. Fraser, writing about it, says:

"Here the channel contracts to about forty yards and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by

land, all hands without hesitation embarked upon the mercy of this awful tide.

"Once engaged the die was cast, our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes clear of the precipice on one side and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus, skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews, cool and determined, followed each other in awful silence and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulation at our narrow escape from total destruction."

Realizing that it was out of the question to navigate such a river Fraser *cached* the canoes and what luggage his men were not able to carry and they started off on foot. Toward the end of the month they found the river more suitable for boats. They obtained three dugouts from the Indians and in them paddled toward the coast. After a time the tide began to rise and fall in the river and Fraser knew he was approaching the Pacific Ocean. He had done what he had set out to do; he had followed the course of the river which now bears his name, to its outlet.

As the coast Indians were very warlike and unfriendly the exploring party did not remain. The savages harrassed them sorely on the first

part of the return journey. They had to struggle with rapids and swift currents and at the same time be on their guard against attack. At night they were unable to take proper rest not knowing when a band of Indians might pounce upon them. Despairing of success the men were loath to proceed; but Fraser persuaded them to continue. By and by they left the hostile tribes behind and the Indians in the interior aided them in every way they could. They found their canoes, which had been *cached,* unmolested.

On August 5th they re-entered the gates of Fort George. Fraser had explored the river and taken possession of it and the surrounding country for Canada. He reported to the Company that the river was not the Columbia as they had thought, and moreover, it was not navigable for canoes, hence there was no way out on it for furs.

David Thompson

Piegan Indians had pitched their tents outside Fort Kootenae. They could not enter the heavy gate barred against them and they did not consider their forces sufficient to attack the stronghold of David Thompson and his six companions. The fort had been built of stout fir timbers. One side stood on the steep bank of the Columbia River; the other three were guarded by stockades and bastions. The Piegans intended to wait until hunger and thirst had weakened the little garrison.

There was a small stock of dried provisions which Thompson doled out sparingly.

"They thought to make us suffer for want of water," wrote Thompson in his journal, "as the bank we were on was about 20 feet high and very steep; but at night by a strong cord we quietly and gently let down two brass kettles each holding four gallons and drew them up full; which was enough for us."

At the end of three weeks the Piegans folded their tents and went away. Thompson feared it was a ruse to lure his men outside the fortifications but he found out that the Piegans had come across some Kootenay Indians while hunting and on that account had left.

When they returned to the rest of their tribe, unsuccessful, a council of war was held. The War Chief ordered each brave to provide himself with food for ten days.

"We shall soon leave the country of the bison," he told them, "after which we must not fire a shot or we shall be discovered."

Three hundred braves assembled and marched across the mountains to attack Fort Kootenae. When a day's journey from the fort they waited until the two messengers they had sent ahead should come back.

Thompson invited the two Piegan warriors inside the stockade and pointed out how strongly fortified he was. The spies remained all night; the following morning, before they departed, Thompson gave them presents to carry back to their chiefs. Then he said:

"You have no right to be in the Kootenae country. Haste away. The Kootenaes will soon

be here and they will fight for their trading post."

The two braves related what the white man had said to them and showed the presents he had sent.

The chiefs of the war-party looked thoughtfully at the tobacco and the red pipe with its ornamented pipe stem. After a while the War Chief began to speak.

"What is to be done with these," he said, indicating the present, "if we proceed, nothing of what is before us can be accepted." Then, referring to David Thompson, he said, "What can we do with this man, our women cannot mend a pair of shoes but he sees them." (An allusion to the astronomical observations made by the explorer; the telescope with its capacity for viewing objects at a great distance seemed a wonderful thing to them).

Presently the eldest of the three chiefs, wistfully eyeing the tobacco of which they had none, said:

"You all know me, who I am and what I am. I have attacked tents, my knife could cut through them, and our enemies had no defence against us, and I am ready to do so again, but to go and

fight against logs of wood that a ball cannot go through, and with people we cannot see and with whom we are at peace is what I am averse to, I go no further."

After making this speech he filled the red pipe with tobacco and the chiefs all smoked. War was not to be waged against Fort Kootenae at this time. David Thompson's intimate acquaintance with the ways of the Indians had taught him what to do. He says, "Thus by the mercy of good Providence I averted this danger."

The North West Company had sent Thompson to find the upper reaches of the Columbia River and trace it to the Pacific Ocean, so there would be a water route for their furs. Thompson had travelled many miles through the wilderness before he had reached one of the branches of the Columbia and there, near the lake now known as Windermere, he had erected Fort Kootenae.

However, although the beginnings of the mighty river had been discovered, he had yet to follow its zig-zag course for over a thousand miles to the Coast.

Howse Pass, through which the explorer had been crossing the Rocky Mountains, was controlled by the Piegan Indians. This warlike

tribe took offence because they claimed their enemies had received supplies from the fur-traders and they vowed vengeance.

A party of Thompson's men in the mountains was attacked by a band of Piegans. When the men did not return to camp Thompson sent to search for them. The searchers came upon the place where the men had defended themselves. A shot was fired to see if any were near and would answer. No reply was received, but the Piegans were roused by the shot and sent scouts to find where it came from.

Early the next morning Thompson and the men with him set out on horseback. The Piegans followed their trail. On they came! Suddenly they met three grizzly bears directly in their path.

"They were fully persuaded that I had placed the bears there to prevent any further pursuit," Thompson says, "nor could any arguments to the contrary make them believe otherwise and this belief was a mercy to us."

The second day Thompson ran across the missing men, who fortunately had managed to escape the Indians.

Thompson was now in a difficult position.

"We had no further hope of passing in safety by the defiles of the Saskatchewan River," he writes, "we must now change our route to the defiles of the Athabasca River which would place us in safety but would be attended with great inconvenience, fatigue, suffering and privation; but there was no alternative."

On the 29th of December, Thompson and his men on snowshoes began their journey across the Rocky Mountains to the Columbia River. They had dog-sleds and pack horses for the supplies. New Year's Day, 1811, the thermometer was twenty-two degrees below zero. In Thompson's diary is this entry. "We marched all day to 4.30 p.m. when we camped, placing the branches of the pine under us, and a few small branchy trees to windward, this was all our protection from the bitter cold."

On January 10th they sighted the height of land between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

"It was to me a most exhilarating sight, but to my uneducated men a dreadful sight, they had no scientific object in view, their feelings were of the place they were . . . . My men were of the most hardy that could be picked out of a hundred brave hardy men but the scene of desolation before us was dreadful and I knew it. A

heavy gale of wind, much more a mountain storm, would have buried us beneath it."

On the 18th they reached the banks of the Columbia River and there they spent the rest of the winter near the mouth of Canoe River.

In April Thompson again began his explorations and about noon on the 15th of July he came in sight of the Pacific Ocean.

During his journeys David Thompson traversed forests, mountains and rivers in districts hitherto almost untouched by the white man and "placed on the map the main routes of travel in one million two hundred thousand square miles of Canada and five hundred thousand square miles of the United States."

Sir John Franklin

There was nothing to eat, for the food supply had become exhausted; John Franklin and the men with him were very hungry. They were exploring the far north of Canada and the provisions they had carried had been used. They had managed to capture some birds and small animals but now they could find no more. They had had to eat mosses or lichens and even shoe leather.

In spite of this, John Franklin's courage did not fail; he spoke encouragingly to the men, who were travelling with him from the Arctic Sound to Fort Enterprise. He and his companions were ill and weak for lack of proper food, but Franklin did not despair.

"We must push on or we shall die of cold and hunger," he told them. "Courage, my men! We shall yet reach the fort."

His cheery words put fresh heart into those with him and they struggled forward.

Sinking of the Ship *Breadalbane* of the Franklin search expedition.
(*Courtesy Public Archives of Canada*)

During the short Arctic summer Franklin had covered 550 miles of the far north coast line, making maps and charts and taking observations. The party of explorers had intended leaving before the rivers froze, but that year winter settled in unusually early. Although it was only the latter part of August snow had already come and the waters through which they had hoped to paddle had turned to ice; their canoes were of no use on the frozen rivers and lakes. Wild fowl and game had fled before the chilly blast of the north wind. This was disastrous because they had counted on wild geese and deer to supplement their meagre stock of provisions. To stay where they were was impossible. To go on seemed almost out of the question unless they took a short cut through the Barren Lands, and this was an undertaking which even Indian braves did not care to tackle.

But their plight was desperate. They must attempt the crossing of the Barren Lands or perish. This name was given to a bleak, desolate tract of country, a plain without trees except for an occasional clump of shrubs. The explorers could find no game and they required nourishing food to give them strength for such a journey as lay before them. But they could

find nothing, not even an old musk-ox, and their food was all gone.

A blizzard roared around them. For two days they had to remain within the icy shelter they had improvised. When at last the storm was over they saw that the snow was piled high. They started out, but it was very hard walking. The below zero temperature was felt more keenly because of the strong wind that blew.

"There is no use," one of them said. "Let us quit." He knew that to stop meant freezing to death, but he was so tired and discouraged that he did not care.

Franklin paused and spoke cheerily. "Do not give up. We still have a chance. Once we are through these Bad Lands we will find some game and have plenty to eat then."

Thus encouraged, the man and the rest of the party trudged wearily on. It was all Franklin could do to urge the men forward. How much easier it would have been to lie down in the snow and sleep their last sleep.

But with kindness and firmness he talked to them, and by and by they left the Bad Lands behind them.

"Deer!" exclaimed one of the company in a breathless whisper. "Over yonder!"

Quietly they stalked the animals and before long they were enjoying a good meal of venison meat, the first meal the starving men had had for some time. With renewed strength they pushed ahead.

When they came to the Coppermine River they looked at the river and shook their heads.

"We cannot cross," said another of the men. "There are swift stretches of rapids here and there. If the river were frozen we could walk, or if we had our canoes we could paddle, but we cannot fly, and that is the only way to reach the other side that I can see."

Franklin did not say anything for a moment, then he pointed to the willow trees, and said tersely. "Rafts! They will take the place of canoes. They can be made from the willow branches."

It was not an easy matter to make rafts that would carry them across the boiling waters of the Coppermine, but somehow or other it was done and they all reached the other bank in safety.

On they went but in such an exhausted state that they crawled over the last lap of the journey, dragging themselves along on their hands and knees.

When they arrived at Fort Enterprise there was neither people nor food there as they had expected and it was a long weary wait before help came. Six of the party died.

Franklin returned to England, but a few years later he again set out for Canada, to continue the exploration of the far north. He made maps of his journeys, and added twelve hundred miles to the coast line in the north. For this remarkable feat and for his services as an explorer John Franklin was knighted by the King.

When Sir John Franklin was almost sixty years of age he was sent at the head of an expedition which was to find the north-west passage to the Orient. Ever since Columbus had discovered America men had been seeking a way through to Asia but no one had succeeded. The rich spices, jewels and silks of India were sought in trade and a short cut was of importance. If a way could be found that would save the journey around by the dreaded Cape of Good Hope commerce would increase.

Franklin was well acquainted with the northland. He had spent many winters there, braving the cold and the storms. He knew how to prepare for the severity of the weather, for days when the very tea in the tea-pot sometimes

froze before it could be drunk. He was just the man for the task; calm and resourceful in danger, cheerful under trying circumstances, a Christian gentleman whom his men admired and respected. The sailors under him considered themselves very fortunate. One of the ships he once commanded had been called, "Franklin's Paradise."

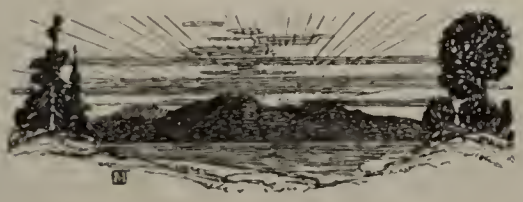
On the 26th of May, 1845 Sir John Franklin and his party set out for Behring Strait, sailing in the two ships, the *Terror* and the *Erebus,* provisioned for three years. At first when no word was received from the explorers but little alarm was felt, but when three years had gone by and still no message had come from Franklin an expedition was despatched in search of him.

The ships were discovered frozen in the ice. Franklin and his men had been forced to leave them and proceed on foot. They had explored the coast of King William's Land and there had seen a strait which had already been reached from the Western coast. But they did not manage the return trip. Some years later a search party came across various articles, telescopes, guns, knives and forks which the unfortunate explorers had used.

Although Franklin never returned to England

he had solved the problem of the long-sought north-west passage, for the strait he mentioned in his papers was the last link in the chain of waters through which the passage led.

There is a monument erected to Sir John Franklin's memory in Waterloo Place, London; and a tablet in Westminster Abbey commemorates his heroic services and death.



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